

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-13 (Cancelled).

14. (Currently Amended): An image-forming apparatus supervising system supervising at least one image-forming apparatus which contains usage information and a central control apparatus connected via a communication line, said system configured to supervise said at least one image-forming apparatus via the communication line, said system comprising:

a usage information transmitting device configured to receive and transmit said usage information from said at least one image-forming apparatus to the central control apparatus, said usage information being related to usage career information of the image forming apparatus;

an apparatus list generating device configured to generate an apparatus list indicating the at least one image-forming apparatuses from which said usage information is to be obtained;

a first obtaining operation executing device configured to execute a first obtaining operation for obtaining said usage information from said at least one image-forming apparatus;

a confirming device configured to confirm which of the at least one image-forming apparatus maintains not-yet-obtained usage information after the first obtaining operation is executed by comparing the resulting of the first obtaining operation with the apparatus list;

a not-yet-obtained list generating device configured to generate a not-yet-obtained list indicating which of the at least one image-forming apparatus maintains said not-yet-obtained usage information based upon the confirmation; and

a second obtaining operation executing device configure to execute a second obtaining operation for obtaining said usage information from the at least one image-forming apparatus by accessing the at least one image-forming apparatus based on image forming apparatuses listed on the not-yet-obtained list, which is generated based upon the confirmation,

wherein said confirming device includes a not-yet-obtained usage information second confirming device configured to compare, after execution of the second obtaining operation, the list of image-forming apparatuses which transmitted with the not-yet-obtained list and confirm which data communication and image-forming apparatuses have said not-yet-obtained usage information, said not-yet-obtained usage information list generating device including a not-yet-obtained information list regenerating device configured to regenerate the not-yet-obtaining information list indicating which data communication and image-forming apparatuses have said not-yet-obtained usage information,

wherein said second obtaining operation executing device executes another second obtaining operation after a predetermined time has elapsed if, after execution of the second obtaining operation, at least one data communication or image-forming apparatus with said not-yet-obtained usage information is confirmed,

wherein said central control apparatus includes a usage information obtaining-impossible-list generating device configured to generate a usage information obtaining-impossible-list indicating that at least one data communication or image-forming apparatus has said not-yet-obtained usage information even though a predetermined number times of

the second obtaining operations have been executed by the second obtaining operation
executing device,

~~An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to claim 12,~~ wherein the central control apparatus transmits obtaining-impossible-list to at least one of a sales person and a service person in charge of the image-forming apparatus having said not-yet-obtained usage information, and

wherein said usage information obtaining impossible list is outputted per sales branch or service company, said sales or service branch being in charge of the image forming apparatus still having the usage information specified by the obtaining impossible list.

15. (Currently Amended): An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to ~~claims 1 or 11~~ 14, further comprising:

a bill-submitting-device configured to submit a bill based on a difference in usage information obtained between a preceding and current number of image-formed sheets.

16. (Original): An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to claim 15, wherein said bill submitting device does not submit the bill if the difference is abnormal.

17. (Previously Presented): An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to claim 16, wherein said abnormal difference represents that the current number is prescribed times as much as an average value calculated by averaging total usage information of users.

18-30 (Canceled).

31 (Currently Amended): An image-forming apparatus supervising system with a plurality of data communication apparatuses each connected with at least one image-forming apparatus which contains usage information and a central control apparatus connected with said plurality of data communication apparatus via a communication line, said system configured to supervise said at least one image-forming apparatus via the communication line and the plurality of data communication apparatus, said system comprising:

means for receiving and transmitting said usage information from said at least one image-forming apparatus to the central control apparatus, said means for receiving and transmitting included in the data communication apparatus and said usage information being related to usage career information of the image forming apparatus;

means for generating an apparatus list indicating the at least one image-forming apparatuses and plurality of data communication apparatuses from which usage information is to be obtained;

a first means for obtaining said usage information from said at least one image-forming apparatus and plurality of data communication apparatuses, said usage information transmitted through at least one of the plurality of data communication apparatuses;

means for confirming which of the plurality of data communication apparatuses and the at least one image-forming apparatus maintain not-yet-obtained usage information, confirmation occurs, after the first obtaining operation is executed by comparing the result of the first obtaining operation with the apparatus list;

means for generating a not-yet-obtained list indicating which of the plurality of data communication and the at least one image-forming apparatus maintain said not-yet-obtained usage information based upon the confirmation; and

a second means for obtaining said usage information from the at least one image-forming apparatus and the plurality of data communication apparatuses by accessing the at

least one image-forming apparatus and the plurality of data communication apparatuses based on image forming apparatuses listed on the not yet obtained list, which is generated based upon the confirmation,

wherein said means for confirming includes means for generating a not-yet-obtained usage information list by comparing, after execution of the second obtaining operation, the list of image-forming apparatuses which transmitted with the not-yet-obtained list and confirming which data communication and image-forming apparatuses have said not-yet-obtained usage information, said means for generating a not-yet-obtained usage information list including a means for regenerating the not-yet-obtaining usage information list indicating which data communication and image-forming apparatuses have said not-yet-obtained usage information, and

wherein said second means for obtaining said usage information executes another second obtaining operation after a predetermined time has elapsed if, after execution of the second obtaining operation, at least one data communication or image-forming apparatus with said not-yet-obtained usage information is confirmed,

wherein said central control apparatus includes means for generating a usage information obtaining-impossible-list indicating that at least one data communication or image-forming apparatus has said not-yet-obtained usage information even though a predetermined number times of the second obtaining operations have been executed by the second means for obtaining usage information,

~~An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to claim 29,~~ wherein the central control apparatus transmits obtaining-impossible-list to at least one of a sales person and a service person in charge of the image-forming apparatus having said not-yet-obtained usage information, and

wherein said usage information obtaining impossible list is outputted per sales branch or service company, said sales or service branch being in charge of the image forming apparatus still having the usage information specified by the obtaining impossible list.

32. (Currently Amended): An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to claims ~~18 or 28~~ 31, further comprising:

means for billing based on a difference in usage information obtained between a preceding and current number of image-formed sheets.

33. (Original): An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to claim 32, wherein said means for billing does not submit the bill if the difference is abnormal.

34. (Previously Presented): An image-forming apparatus supervising system according to claim 33, wherein said abnormal difference represents that the current number is prescribed times as much as an average value calculated by averaging total usage information of users.

35-47 (Canceled).

48 (Currently Amended): A method for supervising a system of image-forming apparatuses with at least one image-forming apparatus which contains usage information and a central control apparatus connected via a communication line, said system configured to supervise said at least one image-forming apparatus via the communication line, comprising the steps of:

receiving and transmitting said usage information from said at least one image-forming apparatus to the central control apparatus, said usage information being related to usage career information of the image forming apparatus;

generating an apparatus list indicating the at least one image-forming apparatuses from which said usage information is to be obtained;

obtaining said usage information from said at least one image-forming apparatus confirming which of the at least one image-forming apparatus maintains not-yet-obtained usage information after the first obtaining operation is executed by comparing the resulting of the first obtaining operation with the apparatus list;

generating a not-yet-obtained list indicating which of the at least one image-forming apparatus maintains said not-yet-obtained usage information based upon the confirmation;
and

re-obtaining said usage information from the at least one image-forming apparatus by accessing the at least one image-forming apparatus based on image forming apparatuses listed on the not yet obtained list, which is generated based upon the confirmation

wherein said step of confirming further comprises the steps of:

generating a not-yet-obtained usage information list by comparing, after the re-obtaining step, the list of image-forming apparatuses which transmitted with the not-yet-obtained list and confirming which data communication and image-forming apparatuses have said not-yet-obtained usage information, said step of generating the not-yet-obtained usage information list including regenerating the not-yet-obtaining usage information list indicating which data communication and image-forming apparatuses have not-yet-obtained usage information, and

wherein said step of re-obtaining said usage information occurs again after a predetermined time has elapsed if, after execution of the second obtaining operation, at least

one data communication or image-forming apparatus with said not-yet-obtained usage information is confirmed,

further comprising the steps of:

generating a usage information obtaining-impossible-list indicating that at least one data communication or image-forming apparatus has said not-yet-obtained usage information even though a predetermined number times of the second obtaining operations have been executed,

~~A method according to claim 46, further comprising the step of:~~

sending said obtaining-impossible-list to at least one of a sales person and a service person in charge of the image-forming apparatus having said not-yet-obtained usage information, and

outputting said usage information obtaining impossible list per sales branch or service company, said sales or service branch being in charge of the image forming apparatus still having the usage information specified by the obtaining impossible list.

49. (Currently Amended): A method according to claims ~~35 or 45~~ 48, further comprising the step of:

billing based on a difference in usage information obtained between a preceding and current number of image-formed sheets.

50. (Original): A method according to claim 49, wherein said step of billing does not submit the bill if the difference is abnormal.

51. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 50, wherein said step of billing does not submit the bill if the abnormal difference represents that the current number

is prescribed times as much as an average value calculated by averaging total usage information of users.

52. (New) The image forming apparatus supervising system according to Claim 14, wherein said usage information obtaining impossible list is provided with one of a name of the sales branch, a name of a person of the sales branch in charge, and a telephone number of the sales branch, in charge of the image forming apparatus.

53. (New) The image forming apparatus supervising system according to Claim 14, wherein the central control apparatus includes contact information used in contacting each of said image forming apparatus, said contact information including one of names of a service company, a sales branch, and a person in charge, and a contact destination.